

SPAWN



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89

DIGITAL
EDITION

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TODD MCFARLANE AND IMAGE COMICS PRESENT...

THE DEVIL YOU KNOW



PLOT

Brian Holguin
Todd McFarlane

STORY

Brian Holguin

PENCILER

Greg Capullo

INKER

Danny Miki
Lee Matsunami

COPY EDITOR and LETTERING
Tom Orzechowski

COLOR

Dan Kemp
Brian Haberlin

COVER ART

Greg Capullo
Todd McFarlane

president of entertainment

TERRY FITZGERALD

executive director of publishing

BEAU SMITH

managing editor

MELANIE SIMMONS

art director

BRENT ASHE

designers

JOHN GALLAGHER
BOYD WILLIAMS

publisher for Image Comics

JIM VALENTINO

SPAWN 88 Summary

A frightened child named Mary tells the story of her life with her mean, abusive stepfather. When Sam and Twitch investigate his untimely death, they rule it an accident even though it seems like they know their red-cloaked informant was meting out his type of justice. Meanwhile, Cogliostro meets with representatives from both Heaven and Hell to discuss the precarious balance of earth matters that has been disturbed with the resignation of their missing pawn. Mr. Hell leaves the meeting with a final threat to Cog that he needs to deliver Spawn to him quickly or else, while Ms. Heaven concedes that perhaps the will of God isn't quite what it used to be.

DEDICATED TO

My good pal, Dave Thomas



TODD MCFARLANE
PRODUCTIONS



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CORNWALL, CONNECTICUT. AS THE LAST FADING BEAMS OF SUNLIGHT FILTER THROUGH THE BRIGHT SPRAYS OF AUTUMN LEAVES...

JUDGE MASON EVERETT STERLING III PULLS INTO THE DRIVEWAY OF HIS SEVEN-BEDROOM, RED-BRICK GOTHIC REVIVAL HOME.

AS HE AMBLES UP THE MARBLE STEPS OF THE ENTRY, TODAY'S CASE IS STILL ON JUDGE STERLING'S MIND.

A REMORLESS BAND OF TEENAGE REPROBATES, BLAMING THEIR ACTIONS ON THE VAGUE FAILINGS OF "SOCIETY." JUDGE STERLING WOULD HEAR NOTHING OF IT.

HE'S NEVER HAD MUCH TOLERANCE FOR THAT SORT OF NONSENSE. IT IS ACTION, NOT ATTITUDE, THAT DEFINE A MAN'S CHARACTER.

SIMPLY PUT, A MAN IS WHAT HE DOES.

HE SIFTS THROUGH THE DAY'S MAIL: DINNER INVITATIONS, REQUESTS FOR CHARITABLE DONATIONS, THE USUAL.

HE LOOSENS HIS TIE AND INHALES DEEPLY.

IT'S BEEN A LONG WEEK FOR JUDGE STERLING. HE HAS EARNED A LITTLE RECREATION.

THE MAID AND THE GARDENERS HAVE ALREADY LEFT. JUDGE STERLING IS ALONE. HE CAN RELAX NOW.

HELLO,
ANYBODY HERE?
SERAPHINA?

HE HAS ALWAYS FOUND SOMETHING VERY INVITING, REASSURING ABOUT THE STUDY. THE WOOD PANFLING WAS HAND-CARVED A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FROM INCH-THICK MAHOGANY.

LIGHT STREAMS THROUGH LEADED GLASS WINDOWS, THROWING SMALL, LEAPING RAINBOW PATTERNS ON THE WALLS.

THIS IS MY SANCTUM, HE THINKS TO HIMSELF. THE TEMPLE OF THE CIVILIZED MAN.

HE POURS HIMSELF A DRINK. THREE FINGERS OF A RATHER EXPENSIVE SINGLE MALT SCOTCH AND TWO PERFECTLY FORMED ICE CUBES.

UNLOCKING A CABINET, HE RIFLES THROUGH A COLLECTION OF VIDEO TAPES. JUDGE STERLING BELIEVES YOU CAN LEARN A LOT ABOUT A PERSON BY HIS TASTE IN FILMS.

HIS LATE WIFE, BARBARA, LOVED OLD ROMANCES AND SCREW-BALL COMEDIES. STANLEY DONEN, FRANK CAPRA, THAT SORT OF THING.

HIS FATHER, A GREAT, STERN MAN WHO SPOKE IN A DEEP BARITONE, WAS PARTICULARLY FOND OF WESTERNS.

JUDGE STERLING'S OWN TASTES, HOWEVER, ARE RATHER MORE SELECTIVE.



THE BOOZE PAINTS HIS THROAT, SMOKY YET SOOTHING. HIS WEEK-DAY LIFE OF COURT-HOUSE PRESSURES AND LYING CRIMINALS FADES INTO MEMORY.

THIS TAPE IS A NEW ONE. HE'S BEEN WAITING ALL WEEK TO VIEW IT. JUDGE STERLING IS A COLLECTOR WITH VERY SPECIALIZED TASTES.

HIS FAVORED SUBJECT MATTER IS VERY DIFFICULT TO COME BY. STILL, THROUGH A TIGHT NETWORK OF FELLOW CONNOISSEURS, HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO AMASS A SIZABLE LIBRARY.

THIS ONE'S QUITE GOOD, HE THINKS TO HIMSELF. THE GIRLS CAN'T BE OLDER THAN 11. THE BOY EVEN YOUNGER. THE SOUND IS RATHER POOR BUT THE PICTURE IS REASONABLY SHARP.

HE SINKS INTO THE RICH, WARM LEATHER OF THE COUCH. JUST WATCH. AND WAIT.

WAIT FOR THE GOOD PART...

CLUNK.
KILL!

WHAT WAS THAT?

TURN AROUND

WHO
ARE YOU?
HOW DID YOU
GET IN
HERE?





MASON
STERLING...

IT IS
TIME FOR
YOU TO BE
JUDGED!

GET OUT OF MY HOUSE ! DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM ?!

YOU ARE ON MY PROPERTY ! THAT MEANS I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT TO YOU !

I CAN SHOOT YOUR BALLS OFF AND STUFF THEM IN YOUR MOUTH AND STILL CALL IT SELF-DEFENSE.

HIS VOICE IS ALL BRAVADO, BUT JUDGE STERLING'S OLD BONES ARE SHAKING.

BLAM BLAM BLAM

HAH ! I GOT HIM !

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE HE'S FIRED A GUN. HE CAN'T BELIEVE HIS LUCK.

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS ?

WHAT
ARE
YOU?

NO. THE
QUESTION IS,
WHAT ARE YOU?
YOU ARE A FOUL,
TWISTED LITTLE
MAN WHO PREYS
VICARIOUSLY ON
THE SUFFERING
OF OTHERS.

I NEVER
TOUCHED
ANYONE. I
SWEAR! ALL
I DID WAS
WATCH.

YOU
PAID PEOPLE
TO PROCURE
THOSE TAPES FOR
YOU. HOW DID YOU
THINK THEY WERE
GOING TO GET
THEM?

YOU HAVE
SUBSIDIZED
THE PAIN AND
DEBAISEMENT OF
OTHERS, ALL FOR
YOUR OWN SICK
AMUSEMENT.

AND
NOW IT
ENDS.



PLEASE,
JUST LET ME GO
AND I'LL NEVER DO
IT AGAIN. I SWEAR!
I CAN PAY YOU.
ANYTHING YOU
WANT. JUST LET
ME GO!

THERE
ARE THINGS
YOUR MONEY
CAN'T BUY YOU,
STERLING. YOU
KNOW WHAT HAS
TO HAPPEN
NOW, DON'T
YOU?

NO. PLEASE!
I'M BEGGING
YOU!



ALL
RIGHT...

WITH A SHAKY HAND,
JUDGE MASON
EVERETT STERLING III
TAKES A FIVE-HUNDRED
DOLLAR MONT-BLANC
FOUNTAIN PEN AND
WRITES OUT A
CONFESSON ON A
SHEET OF CREAM
COLORED STATIONERY.

IN IT, HE ENUMERATES
HIS SINS, LISTS THE
NAMES AND WHERE-
ABOUTS OF HIS
CO-CONSPIRATORS, AND
BEGS FORGIVENESS
FROM WHOMEVER
MIGHT BE KIND
ENOUGH TO GIVE IT.

WHEN HE IS FINISHED,
THE COLD STEEL
BARREL OF HIS HAND-
GUN IS PLACED
FLUSH AGAINST HIS
RIGHT TEMPLE.

BLAM!



AND A
SINGLE ROUND
IS FIRED,
ECHOING INTO THE
NIGHT.

NEW
YORK
CITY.

NIGHTTIME IN
MANHATTAN.

A SHADOW PLAY
OF ASPHALT AND
NEON, FLESH
AND FANTASY.

THE CITY IS
ALIVE AT
NIGHT, LIKE
SOME GREAT
MYTHIC
BEAST.

BREATHING.

STALKING.

TENSING ITS
MUSCLES.

FEEDING ITS
APPETITES.

THEY EXPERIENCE DELIGHT AND
LONELINESS AND HOPE AND TERROR,
AND BELIEVE NO ONE ELSE IN THE
WORLD CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT
THEY FEEL.

TOWERING
SKYSCRAPERS BEAR
SILENT WITNESS
AS COUNTLESS,
FRAGILE LITTLE
SOULS MINGLE AND
SEPARATE, FALL
TOGETHER AND
FALL APART.

SAKS

JAMS

ABOVE IT ALL, THE HELL-SPAWN WATCHES, LISTENING TO THE SHADOWS.

EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT NOW.

THE DARKNESS MOVES AROUND HIM, EMBRACES HIM. BUT IT ALSO MOVES THROUGH HIM. IT IS AN EXTENSION OF HIM, AND HE OF IT.

AT ANY GIVEN TIME, HALF THE WORLD IS IN SHADOW, WHEREVER SHADOWS FALL IS HIS DOMAIN.

THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE TONIGHT. HIDING, WAITING FOR HIM.

SOMEWHERE IN THE NIGHT, A VIPER IS NESTING.

HE SCANS THE HORIZON. "WHERE? WHERE IS IT?"

COGLIOSTRO'S
LIBRARY,
SECRETED
IN THE SUB-
BASEMENT
OF THE
NEW YORK
MUSEUM OF
ANTIQUITIES.

THERE.

THE REPOSITORY
OF ALL EARTHLY
KNOWLEDGE
REGARDING
THE CURSE
THAT UNTIL
RECENTLY
AFFLICTED
SPAWN.

DOORS OPEN,
ALARMS FALL SILENT
AT HIS WHIM.

THE SHADOWS CALL HIM.

HIS
CLOAK
RIPPLES
WITH
AWARE-
NESS.



"AND THE
SUN TURNED
BLACK AS
SACKCLOTH, AND
THE OCEANS
CHURNED WITH
BLOOD..."

"AND
THROUGHOUT
ALL THE
NATIONS OF MEN,
THERE WAS GREAT
WAILING AND
GNASHING OF
TEETH..."

Oh, I
THINK
I QUITE
LIKE
THAT.

WHO
ARE
YOU?

I DON'T
THINK THERE'S
ANY NEED FOR
INTRODUCTIONS,
DO YOU?





WHERE IS COG?



COGLIOSTRO,
IF HE HAS ANY SENSE
AT ALL, IS DIGGING
HIMSELF A VERY DEEP
HOLE IN THE MOST
REMOTE QUARTER
OF ANTARCTICA.



NOT THAT
IT WILL
HELP HIM
ANY.



BUT HE IS NOT A
CONCERN OF YOURS. YOU
AND I, ON THE OTHER HAND,
HAVE QUITE A BIT TO
DISCUSS.



THERE'S
NOTHING
TO TALK
ABOUT.



OK, BUT
THERE IS, NOW,
I DON'T THINK YOU
UNDERSTAND
EXACTLY WHAT YOU
HAVE DONE, OR
HOW DEEPLY THE
RAMIFICATIONS
OF YOUR
ACTIONS
RUN.



YOU HAVE
CAUSED A GREAT
DEAL OF DISCOMFORT
TO A GREAT NUMBER OF
PEOPLE. YOU ARE A CHILD
PLAYING WITH MATCHES
WHO IS DANGEROUSLY
CLOSE TO BURNING
THE HOUSE
DOWN.

BUT... LET'S LEAVE THAT ASIDE FOR A MOMENT. IT IS CLEAR THAT WE HAVE UNDERESTIMATED YOU. YOU ARE FAR MORE CLEVER THAN WE GAVE YOU CREDIT FOR.

BUT YOU DID MAKE A DEAL, AND IT IS ONE TO WHICH YOU WILL BE HELD. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

SIMMONS MADE A DEAL. SIMMONS IS DEAD.

Oh, PLEASE, YOU DON'T THINK YOU ARE THE FIRST TO TRY THAT LITTLE LOOP-HOLE, DO YOU? I'M AFRAID IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY.

STILL, SITUATIONS BEING WHAT THEY ARE, I AM NOT AT ALL OPPOSED TO THE IDEA OF RE-NEGOTIATION.

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER ME.

OF COURSE I DO. I CAN GRANT YOU YOUR HEART'S DESIRE. WHAT WAS HER NAME? WANDA? VERY WELL, SHE SHALL BE YOURS. WHAT ELSE?

TRICKS. LIES.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT, YOU HAD A RATHER BAD EXPERIENCE WITH MY ASSOCIATE. I NEVER QUITE UNDERSTOOD WHY HE DOES THAT. I SUPPOSE HE THINKS IT'S FUNNY.

BUT I BELIEVE IN DEALING PLAINLY. IF WANDA IS WHAT YOU WANT, WHY NOT JUST GIVE HER TO YOU? IT'S A LOT SIMPLER IN THE LONG RUN.

THE FACT OF THE MATTER, DEAR BOY, IS THAT YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO US. TO ME. I WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY. PLEASE, TELL ME WHAT I CAN DO FOR YOU...

YOU CAN GO BACK TO HELL AND ROT.



THAT WAS RATHER, RUDE. WHY WOULD YOU SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT? ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME ANGRY? I DON'T THINK THAT'S WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO DO.

YOU HAVE NO CONCEPT OF WHAT I AM. NO CONCEPT OF WHAT POWER I WIELD.

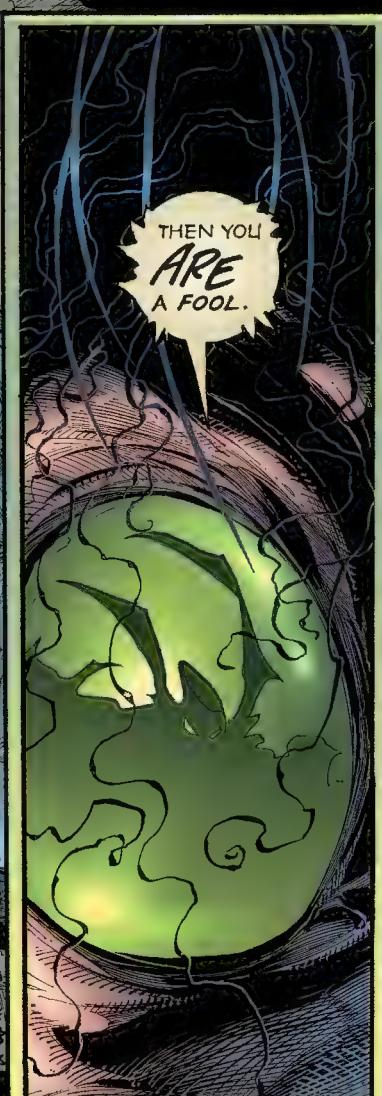


I AM OLDER THAN MAN. I AM OLDER THAN THIS PATHETIC DIRT CLOD WE ARE STANDING ON. I AM OLDER THAN TIME.

THERE IS NOTHING IN YOUR TINY "EXPERIENCE" THAT COULD POSSIBLY LEND YOU THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE AS TO WHAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH.

YOU ARE QUITE OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE, BOY. YOU MADE A DEAL, AND WE EXPECT YOU TO HONOR IT.

I'M NOT AFRAID OF MALEBOLGIA AND I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU.



THEN YOU ARE A FOOL.

MALEBOLGIA
IS A **FLEA**
BUZZING AROUND
MY EAR. BUT HE IS
MY FLEA. AND
WHATEVER IS HIS.
ULTIMATELY
BELONGS TO
ME.

YOU
BELONG
TO ME.



OR I CAN
BE VERY
GENEROUS.

I CAN
BE VERY
UNPLEASANT IF
THE MOOD STRIKES.
I CAN HEAP SUCH
MISERIES UPON YOU
THAT NO **WORDS**
IN YOUR PETTY
LITTLE LANGUAGE
COULD BEGIN
TO DESCRIBE
THEM.

YOU CAN GO
OFF AND CREATE
WHATEVER WORLDS
YOU LIKE IN YOUR OWN
IMAGE. POPULATE THEM
ALL WITH BILLIONS
OF "WANDAS." I
DON'T CARE.

I CAN
MAKE YOU
LORD OF THE
EIGHTH CIRCLE.
I'LL SERVE YOU
MALEBOLGIA'S
HEART ON A
PLATE IF THAT'S
WHAT YOU WANT.
I CAN MAKE
A **GOD** OUT
OF YOU.

BUT WHEN
THE TIME COMES,
YOU **MUST** DO WHAT
I ASK. I CAN GRANT
YOU YOUR EVERY
WISH OR I CAN
HURT IN WAYS
YOU'VE NEVER
IMAGINED.



BUT I
WILL NEVER,
EVER
LET YOU SLIP
FROM MY GRASP.
IS THAT
CLEAR?



ARE YOU SMIRKING UNDER THAT MASK? DO YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY? LOOK AROUND YOU. THIS IS THE HISTORY OF YOUR KIND.

TEN THOUSAND GENERATIONS OF HELLSPAWN, ALL BOUND FOREVER IN THE CHAINS OF HELL.

EACH ONE SURE THEY COULD SOMEHOW ESCAPE THEIR FATE, AND EVERY ONE WAS WRONG. DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU'RE THAT SPECIAL?

THERE IS BUT ONE THING IN THIS UNIVERSE THAT CAN UNDO ME, AND YOU ARE NOT IT.

YOU BEAR OUR MARK, YOU ARE OUR PROPERTY. YOU BELONG TO ME!

NOW... ARE YOU GOING TO BE A GOOD LITTLE SOLDIER OR NOT?



LOOK AT ME.
I DON'T BELONG
TO YOU. I DON'T
BELONG TO
ANYONE.

I DON'T GIVE
A DAMN ABOUT
YOUR LITTLE WAR.
I DON'T GIVE A
DAMN ABOUT THIS...
THIS HISTORY.
HISTORY BEGINS
NOW, WITH
ME.

AH, I SEE YOU
DO. THE LANCE OF AN
ANGELIC HUNTRESS.
CHARGED WITH THE
LIGHT OF HEAVEN
ITSELF.

AHHAH.

BUT HOW
CAN--

DO
YOU
KNOW
WHAT
THIS
IS?

HOW CAN
I TOUCH IT
WITHOUT BEING
DESTROYED?
BECAUSE YOUR
RULES NO LONGER
APPLY TO ME.
AND NEITHER
DO THEIRS.

THE ONE
HEAVEN AND
HELL HAVE BEEN
KEEPING FROM
MAN SINCE THE
DAWN OF TIME.

WE
DON'T
NEED YOU.
YOU NEED
US! ISN'T
THAT
RIGHT?

GET THAT
AWAY
FROM ME!

YOU DON'T
KNOW WHAT
I'VE BECOME.
YOU DON'T
KNOW WHAT I'VE
LEARNED. I'VE SEEN
THE TRUTH. AND
I KNOW YOUR
DIRTY LITTLE
SECRET.

DON'T WET
YOURSELF.
I WON'T HAND
HEAVEN SUCH AN
EASY VICTORY.
BUT I WANT YOU
TO REMEMBER
THAT I COULD
HAVE.

AND AS A
REMINDER...

YOU
SHALL WEAR
MY MARK!
AND ALL CREATION
WILL KNOW THAT
YOU FAILED
TO BREAK
ME!

FROM
NOW,
UNTIL THE
END OF
TIME...



HOW DARE YOU... HOW DARE YOU! IF WE WERE IN MY REALM, I WOULD REND YOUR SOUL TO ATOMS FOR THIS... AFFRONT!



BUT WE'RE NOT IN YOUR REALM. WE ARE IN MINE.



LOOK AT ME. I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER THE MAN WHO DID THAT TO YOU. REMEMBER THIS DAY AND KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT WELCOME HERE.



THIS WORLD AND ITS SHADOWS BELONG TO ME NOW. FROM NOW ON, MEN SHALL ANSWER TO THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE, AND WHEN THEY WILL NOT, THEY SHALL ANSWER TO ME.



DO WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER?



GOOD.

LATER.



WELL, IT'S ABOUT TIME THINGS GOT INTERESTING AROUND HERE.



NEXT:
THREE USES
OF THE

KNIFE





EMPIRE